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# Condon Statement Replies to Editorial

The following is a statement to The Globe-Democrat by Dr. Edward U. Condon, professor in the department of physics at Washington University, replying to a recent editorial in The Globe entitled "Glorification of Deceit."

"You say that I was 'once described by a House committee as the 'weakest link in America's security chain.' More accurately, a much weaker epithet was coined in 1948 in an irresponsible press release from the then chairman of the House Committee on Un-American Activities, Mr. J. Parnell Thomas, who acted without the approval of his whole committee. He contented himself with saying that I 'appear to be one of the weak-

est links in our atomic security."

## NEVER BACKED UP

"He never backed up that charge with any evidence despite repeated promises to do so. After the election, Mr. Richard Nixon, then a member of that House committee, was quoted in the press as saying that the chairman had taken an unfair action and that he (Nixon) regretted it. About this time Mr. Thomas was sent off to Federal Penitentiary, having been convicted of fraud in taking payroll kickbacks from the secretaries in his office.

"Solely because of these things, I was given at that time two complete loyalty hearings under Truman procedures and completely cleared. Not only was my clearance for Department of Defense classified work never suspended during this period, but in fact the Navy substantially increased my participation in guided-missile work the very week that Mr. Thomas first used the epithet in question. The Atomic Energy Commission requested the Federal Bureau of Investigation to look through into my background, after which the Atomic Energy Commission reaffirmed my clearance.

## IN SECRET WORK

"From then on through 1951 I was heavily engaged in secret national defense work as Director of the National Bureau of Standards. This involved secret work for each branch of the Department of Defense, for the Central Intelligence Agency and for the Atomic Energy Commission.

"Perhaps the most important part of this work was what the National Bureau of Standards did while I was its director, in helping develop the hydrogen bomb in 1950 and 1951. Dr. Edward Teller has written of this work, and of my part in it, that it advanced the date of our getting a successful hydrogen bomb

by many months, probably a year. If this estimate is correct, then without these efforts we would have been so delayed that our hydrogen bomb would have been completed after that of the Russians instead of before as actually happened.

## GREAT UPROAR

"McCarthyism reached a peak in 1954, with the greatest deceitful uproar about alleged subversives at Fort Monmouth, the Army-McCarthy television hearings, and the AEC suspension of Dr. Robert Oppenheimer. In the spring of that year I was given an elaborate security hearing before the Eastern Industrial Personnel Security Board under the revised procedures established by President Eisenhower.

"This too resulted in my complete clearance for Department of Defense 'classified' work in connection with the industrial position I held at that time. I was thus again able to contribute to national security and in the summer of 1954 took a leading part in developing a guided-missile nose cone for the Navy which passed its tests successfully and is now in production.

"But 1954 was an election year again. In mid-October, Mr. Nixon was again shouting about 20 years of treason in his campaign speeches. The then Secretary of the Navy suspended my clearance at Mr. Nixon's suggestion, or so Mr. Nixon claimed in a press statement at the time.

I made efforts after the election to have it quietly reinstated so that I could continue to contribute to national security as I did during the war (rockets, proximity fuses, micro-wave radar, atomic bombs) and after the war up to 1951 and for a short time in the summer of 1954. Although he admitted that he had no new evidence which might have justified his action, the then Secretary of the Navy had to save face and so refused to clear up the matter.

## SYSTEM ABUSED

I then became convinced that our personnel security system was being abused by officials of the present administration for partisan attack on individuals for partisan political purposes, and without genuine concern for preserving and developing the scientific strength of the defense effort. So I withdrew and have had no connection with the defense effort since the fall of 1954.

Fortunately there many other ways in which a patriotic Ameri-

can serve his country, such as by doing fundamental research and by teaching. Therefore I feel that I am making a worthwhile contribution and am happy in my work, proud to be a member of the faculty of Washington University, and to be a citizen of St. Louis County. Maybe some day when McCarthyism is completely dead, in spite of your efforts to revive it, I will be allowed to make additional direct contributions to the scientific side of national defense.

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